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The First Edition of Allan Ramsay's *Elegy on Maggy Johnston*

Adam Fox

One of the earliest and best-known poems by Allan Ramsay (1684–1758) is his *Elegy on Maggy Johnston, Who Died Anno 1711*. It celebrates the life of a woman who was clearly well beloved of Edinburgh people in the early eighteenth century. As Ramsay later explained:

Maggy Johnston liv'd about a mile southward of Edinburgh, kept a little farm, and had a particular art of brewing a small sort of ale agreeable to the taste, very white, clear and intoxicating, which made people who lov'd to have a good pennyworth for their money be her frequent customers. And many others of every station, sometimes for diversion, thought it no affront to be seen in her barn or yard.¹

Maggy's ale was not only famously strong but also pleasingly cheap: 'she sold the Scots print, which is near two quarts English, for two-pence'. Little wonder, then, that her 'barn and yard' provided such a popular 'houff', and her demise was so much lamented. Ramsay's composition was an example of those elegiac verses on street figures, rendered in vernacular Scots, which became a feature of the period and of which he remained the greatest exponent.

Such compositions tended to appear soon after the death of their subject and thus it has reasonably been assumed that Ramsay wrote the *Elegy on Maggy Johnston* sometime in late 1711 or early 1712. Reference to it is first made in the manuscript 'Journal of the Easy Club', under the date 6 June, and again on 1 and 4 July, 1712. The Easy Club was the small social and literary society founded by Ramsay and his friends on 12 May 1712 and the minute-book of its meetings was kept intermittently up until 11 May 1715. Although the location of this 'Journal' is now unknown, a

¹ *Poems. By Allan Ramsay* (Edinburgh: Thomas Ruddiman for the author, 1721) [hereafter, *Poems* (1721)], 16n.

transcription of it was made in the early twentieth century by Andrew Gibson, and a copy of this made for Burns Martin and J. W. Oliver for publication in their edition of Ramsay's complete works. On 1 July 1712 one of the Club's members had mused on whether Ramsay 'should pull down his Sign of ye wig and Mercury and in Stead thereof hang up ye venerable effigies of Maggie Johnstoun it would be a more effectuall Method to perpetuate her Memory than ye late elegy made by that Author upon her death'.²

The journal's appendix also included the text of Ramsay's '1st Performance Maggie Johnstouns elegy as enlarged and Corrected by him July 30, 1713'. This version consists of 16 stanzas, followed by an 'Epitaph', of which Gibson reproduced the first three in *New Light on Allan Ramsay* (1927).³ Meanwhile, in the Laing Manuscripts at Edinburgh University Library is another copy of the poem written in a different contemporary hand, 'Maggie Johnstowns elegy 2d Edition Enlarged and Corrected By ye Author July 30, 1713'. It is clearly the same work as that in the appendix of the 'Journal', comprising 16 stanzas and the 'Epitaph', although Gibson noted 'slight differences between the two copies ... in the readings of several of the stanzas'.⁴ As Ramsay's twentieth-century editors commented: 'What is meant by the words "2d Edition" in this context is difficult to say: it may refer to a printed separate text that has not survived, or it may merely be a way of saying that the poet has revised it'.⁵

² Andrew Gibson, *New Light on Allan Ramsay* (Edinburgh, 1927), 23–4, 37–8, 48; 'Journal of the Easy Club established in Edinburgh May 1712', in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, eds. Burns Martin, John W. Oliver, Alexander Kinghorn, and Alexander Law (6 vols., Scottish Text Society, 3rd ser., 19–20, 29; 4th ser., 6–8; Edinburgh, 1945–74), v. 1–58; see, v. 10, 13, 14, 15.

³ Gibson, *New Light on Allan Ramsay*, 112, 113, 151.

⁴ Edinburgh University Library, La.II.212, f. 10; Gibson, *New Light on Allan Ramsay*, 114.

⁵ *Works of Allan Ramsay*, eds. Martin, Oliver, Kinghorn, and Law, vi. 25.

By the time Ramsay settled on a third and final edition of the poem it had been reduced to 15 stanzas and the ‘Epitaph’. In this definitive version, the 3rd stanza of the 1713 text was dropped; the 2nd stanza of 1713 became, in revised form, the new 12th stanza; and a few other small linguistic changes were made. The first known copy of this settled version appeared in a 20-page duodecimo tract of 1718, *Elegies on Maggy Johnston, John Cowper, and Lucky Wood. By Allan Ramsay*, described as the ‘second edition corrected and amended’.⁶ The Edinburgh Kirk Treasurer’s man, John Cowper, had died in 1714 and this edition contains a ‘postscript’ dated June 1717. The elegy on the popular tavern-keeper in the Canonagate, Lucky Wood, is dated May 1717, and thus it is likely that Ramsay published the first edition of the three poems together, either later in 1717 or early in 1718, in an imprint that has not survived. A couple of years later he produced the three elegies again in a 16-page octavo, adding another composition of 1718, *Lucky Spence’s Last Advice*, a poem of 17 stanzas in the words of a renowned Edinburgh brothel keeper on the point of death.⁷

From 1719 Ramsay started to bring together all his early pieces in collections of *Poems*.⁸ In August 1720, he issued both in Edinburgh and London, ‘proposals for printing by subscription, the poetical works of Allan Ramsay’, with subscriptions taken in ‘by Thomas Jauncy at the Angel without Temple-Bar, London, and by the Author at the Mercury opposite to Niddry’s Wynd, Edinburgh’. This gathering proposed to assemble ‘all that hath hitherto appeared, together with an Addition of a

⁶ *Elegies on Maggy Johnston, John Cowper, and Lucky Wood. By Allan Ramsay. Second Edition corrected and amended* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Author, at the Mercury, opposite to Niddry’s Wynd. 1718). Two copies of this tract are known: British Library, shelfmark: 1078.h.20; National Library of Scotland, shelfmark: RB.s.1306(5).

⁷ [Allan Ramsay], *Elegy on Maggy Johnston. Who died Anno 1711* ([Edinburgh, 1720?]).

⁸ One such gathering was *Poems. By Allan Ramsay* (Edinburgh: for the author, 1720), in which *Maggy Johnston* was printed, 25–8.

great Number of Poems, Serious and Comick, that have not yet been published', and also promised 'Notes at the Bottom of the Page by the Author, for Explanation of the Scotticisms, with a complete Glossary, giving English for every Scots Word contained in the Volume'.⁹ Accordingly, in the famous subscribers' edition, printed in Edinburgh by Thomas Ruddiman in 1721, the *Elegy on Maggy Johnston* was published for the first time with explanatory footnotes, glossing vernacular phrases and interpreting local allusions for the benefit of the London audience. The text of 1721 contains minor differences of orthography, punctuation and typography from that printed in the pamphlet of 1718, but is otherwise the same.¹⁰

As for the first edition of the poem, alluded to as early as June 1712, no trace has been found hitherto. It has long been surmised that Ramsay's initial version of the text may have been published on a single sheet, such that it might easily be sold on the street as well as from his shop. Certainly his *Elegy and Lucky Wood* survives in this form, although both Andrew Gibson and Burns Martin regarded the extant sheet copies that they had seen as unauthorised reprints from the pamphlet text of 1718, rather than earlier iterations preceding it.¹¹ Similarly, *Lucky Spence's Last Advice* still exists in a number of single-sheet copies.¹² In the late nineteenth century T. F. Henderson asserted that *Maggy Johnston* was issued as a 'penny broadside', although cited no

⁹ *Proposals for Printing by Subscription, the Poetical Works of Allan Ramsay* ([Edinburgh, 1720]): the sole surviving copy is NLS, MS.582(615); *Caledonian Mercury* (11 August 1720).

¹⁰ *Poems* (1721), 16–21. The cost of this subscribers' edition was high at a price of 1 guinea in sheets.

¹¹ [Allan Ramsay], *Elegy and Lucky Wood* ([Edinburgh, 1718?]): copies at BL, C.122.i.6, NLS, Ry.III.a.10(112), and NLS, 1.8(25) [the last is not listed on the *ESTC*]; Gibson, *New Light on Allan Ramsay*, 94; Burns Martin, 'A Bibliography of the Writings of Allan Ramsay', *Records of the Glasgow Bibliographical Society*, 10 (1931), 24. In August 1719 Ramsay complained to the Edinburgh Town Council that his 'interest and reputation' had been 'abused by some printers, ballad cryers and others' who published 'poems of his composure without his notice or allowance upon false and uncorrect copies': Edinburgh City Archives, SL1/1/47 (26 August 1719).

¹² [Allan Ramsay], *Lucky Spence's Last Advice* ([Edinburgh, 1718]): copies include NLS, Ry.III.c.36(135), RB.1.262(100), and NLS, S.302.b.2(100). Both BL, C.121.g.9(131), and NLS, Ry.III.a.10(113), have 'whan' instead of 'when' in line 4 of the first stanza.

evidence to support this. Either this was an assumption, or Henderson had seen a copy which he failed to identify.¹³ The latter possibility can now be shown to be unlikely. Ramsay's twentieth-century editors had to concede that the 'earliest identified printed copy is in the edition of 1718' alongside the elegies on John Cowper and Lucky Wood, although they maintained the possibility 'that all three were published individually, perhaps in broadsheet'.¹⁴ This has continued to remain as speculation, until now.

What appears to be the first edition of this famous poem has been found. In one of three bound volumes of broadsides held in the Signet Library, Edinburgh, is a single-sheet copy of *An Elegy On the very much Lamented Death of Maggie Johnston*.¹⁵ The text is undated but it seems to be that original 'performance' of late 1711 or early 1712, or some variant of it. It is clearly a prototype of the definitive version, consisting of just 11 stanzas. It gives early renderings of the stanzas to which Ramsay would later add in providing a total of 16 for the second edition surviving only in manuscript, and it includes the original 3rd stanza that was omitted from the final 15-stanza edition of the text. Notably, these stanzas consist of only five lines each, rather than the familiar six lines with the rhyme scheme aaabab in which the bs form a bob-wheel, which was adopted for the second and third editions. Ramsay was to dub this scheme 'Standart Habby' and it became the mode of many of his popular poems, as it would later be for those of Fergusson and Burns.¹⁶ In 1711, therefore, Ramsay was

¹³ T. F. Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Literature. A Succinct History* (London, 1898), 401.

¹⁴ *Works of Allan Ramsay*, eds. Martin, Oliver, Kinghorn, and Law, vi. 25.

¹⁵ Signet Library Edinburgh, Broad-sides (3 vols.), i. 84. I am grateful to James Hamilton, Research Principal at the Signet Library, for drawing these 3 volumes of broadsides to my attention.

¹⁶ 'Familiar Epistles between Lieutenant William Hamilton and Allan Ramsay. Answer I. Edinburgh, July 10th, 1719', in *Works of Allan Ramsay*, eds. Martin, Oliver, Kinghorn, and Law, i. 119. This verse form was named in deference to the *Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan or, the Epitaph of Habbie Simpson* written by Robert Sempill of Beltrees, who died about 1665, and was emulated by

yet to adopt the Habbaic form and had Henderson seen this single-sheet text he could hardly have described it as being ‘modelled on “Standard *Habbie*”’.¹⁷

This discovery demonstrates that Ramsay did indeed issue his early poems on Edinburgh street characters in sheet form, either before or at the same time as he published them in little pamphlets. There was in fact a first edition of *Maggy Johnston* in print and this, or a variant of it, must have been the text referred to in the ‘Journal of the Easy Club’ in the summer of 1712 and which prefigured the second edition transcribed into its appendix. It provides an example of the way in which Ramsay developed his poems, revising and refining until he was satisfied. The text is not a ‘broadside’ (a folio sheet printed on one side), as Henderson imagined, but printed on a half sheet, as was usual for ballads and poems sold on the Scottish streets at this time. Henderson may well have been correct in guessing that it sold for a penny, but this remains uncertain. On the one hand, in 1715 Ramsay issued one of his poems on *A Scheme and Type of the Great and Terrible Eclipse of the Sun*, a full broadside that was sold at the shop of its printer, James Watson, ‘Price One Penny’.¹⁸ On the other hand, a bound collection of half-sheet ballads and poems from this period contains three items that have ‘2d’ written on the back in a contemporary hand.¹⁹

As to the textual variations across the three editions, one of the biggest differences between the first version and those that followed was the development of five-line stanzas into ones of six. In order to achieve the rhyme scheme aaabab for the second

William Hamilton of Gilbertfield in his mock-elegy, *The Last Dying Words of Bonny Heck a Famous Grey-Hound in the Shire of Fife* ([Edinburgh? 1710?]).

¹⁷ Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Literature*, 401.

¹⁸ *A Scheme and Type of the Great and Terrible Eclipse of the Sun, on the 22d of April, 1715* (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1715): the only known copy, NLS, Ry.1.1.134, measures 43 x 32 cm; Gibson, *New Light on Allan Ramsay*, 50, 101–2.

¹⁹ NLS, Ry.III.a.10(41, 51, 57).

edition of July 1713 Ramsay commonly added a new first or second line to his original stanzas. To stanza 1 of the first edition he added a new second line ('Let fowth of tears dreep like May dew'), as he did to stanza 2 ('Which she stow'd in her masking loom'), and in stanza 3 he added a new first line ('Frae what blae spite I cannot tell'). In the second edition of 1713 the 4th stanza was completely new, with its great line on the social mix at Maggy's, 'Lords and Sutors aw did gang', and comment that her 'barn and yard was aft sa thrang'. This stanza becomes the 2nd in the third edition and is much better rendered as 'Lairds and Souters a did gang', which could be interpreted as changing the meaning from the specific 'lords and their suitors' to the more general sense, in the vernacular, of 'everyone from gentry to cobblers'.²⁰

The 4th stanza in the first edition is that in which Ramsay wonders whether Maggy has passed on the recipe for her famous 'ale as brisk as wine' to her heirs. This is completely rewritten into 'Standard Habbie', becoming the 10th stanza of the second edition and the 8th stanza of the third. In the second edition Ramsay replaces 'the subtile way' of brewing ale, with the more colloquial 'packy knack' (then 'pauky knack'), and in the third edition 'heirs' is similarly improved by becoming 'bairns'. He then adds a new stanza (5th in the second edition and 3rd in the third edition) describing Maggy's customers laying down in the dozens, calling healths to 'bonny lasses', and drowning their cares in bumpers.

The stanza which mentions Bruntsfield Links is the 5th in the first edition ('Burntsfield'), and Ramsay adds a new line ('When in our poutch we fand some

²⁰ One of those lairds who frequented Maggy's was apparently Sir John Foulis: *The Account Book of Sir John Foulis of Ravelston, 1671–1707*, ed. A. W. Cornelius Hallen (Scottish History Society, 1st ser., 16, Edinburgh, 1894), 207, 227, 246, 247.

clinks’) as it becomes the 6th stanza in the second edition and 4th in the third. There is an interesting development of ‘ga’d o’re’ the Links in the first version, to ‘took a waak in’ in the second, before the familiar ‘took a turn or’e’ is finally settled upon in the ultimate text. Then, ‘Aften in Maggy’s at Hy-jinks / We guzled Scuds’ (large gulps). Hy-jinks was, as Ramsay explained in 1721,

A drunken game, or new project to drink and be rich; thus, the quaff or cup is fill’d to the brim, then one of the company takes a pair of dice, and after crying *Hy-jinks*, he throws them out: the number he casts up points out the person must drink, he who threw, beginning at himself number one, and so round till the number of the person agree with that of the dice, (which may fall upon himself if the number be within twelve;) then he sets the dice to him, or bids him take them: he on whom they fall is obliged to drink, or pay a small forfeiture in money; then throws, and so on: but if he forget to cry *Hy-jinks* he pays a forfeiture into the bank. Now he on whom it falls to drink, if there be any thing in bank worth drawing, gets it all if he drinks. Then with a great deal of caution he empties his cup, sweeps up the money, and orders the cup to be fill’d again, and then throws; for if he err in the articles, he loses the privilege of drawing the money. The articles are, (1) Drink, (2) Draw, (3) Fill, (4) Cry *Hy-jinks*, (5) Count just, (6) Chuse your doublet man, viz. when two equal numbers of the dice is thrown, the person whom you chuse must pay a double of the common forfeiture, and so must you when the dice is in his hand. A rare project this, and no bubble I can assure you; for a covetous fellow may save money, and get himself as drunk as he can desire in less than an hour’s time.²¹

The 6th stanza of the first edition, in which Ramsay conveys the sheer pleasure of it all, is moved to stanza 7 in the second edition before it comes to rest as stanza 5 in the final version. The new line that Ramsay added to his second edition, ‘Then cry’d we fill ye quaff again’, is changed in the final version to ‘We drank and drew, and fill’d again’, which rhythmically conveys the building momentum of the drinking. Both the reference to the ‘quaff’ in the second edition, and then to the ‘draw’ in the third, join the allusion to the ‘count’ in providing a link between the ‘hy-jinks’ stanza and the one following with its evocation of the ‘blyth and fain’ atmosphere. Again, the phrasing become ever more colloquial over the three editions: ‘all cry’ becomes ‘aw cry’, and finally ‘a cry’; and ‘spell you dice’ becomes ‘spell ye’r dice’. ‘Pike your Bain’, or ‘pike ye’r Bain’, was another of those phrases that Ramsay needed to

²¹ *Poems* (1721), 17–18n.

explain to the uninitiated in the subscribers' edition: 'when one leaves a little in the cup, he is advised to pike his bane, i.e. drink it clean out'.²²

By stanza 7 in the original (8th in the second edition and 6th in the third) people are beginning to get pretty drunk. To emphasise the point Ramsay added the vivid line in 1713 'and pish and spew and yesk and maunt'.²³ As for those wry lines, 'Then of auld stories we did cant / quhan we ware fow', they were there from the beginning. The famous stanza beginning, 'Whan we were weary'd at the Gouff / Than Maggy Johnston's was our Houff', was the 8th in the first edition, before it became the 9th and eventually the 7th.²⁴ To the image of the gamesters who 'sing' (later 'sit') 'douff' (weary), Ramsay adds the emotional lines, 'wi hearts like lead' as 'Death wi his Rung rax'd her a Youff' (with his cudgel reached her a blow), 'and sae she die'd'.

In the second and third editions Ramsay follows the golfing stanza with that which had originally been his 4th, wondering whether Maggy has passed on her craft to her successors, before adding a new one lamenting the way in which Death has robbed them of their means to 'gat fou wi little cost / and muckle speed'. He then introduces two new stanzas recounting what he reveals in his notes of 1721 to be 'a true narrative' of when, one summer night, he was so drunk that he stopped among the corn riggs to throw up, sat down and fell asleep 'as sound as a tap'.²⁵ He woke up as dawn began to break with no idea how he got there. The final edition then goes on to

²² *Poems* (1721), 18n.

²³ To 'yesk' is to burp, and to 'maunt' is to stutter or slur one's speech.

²⁴ As Ramsay explained in his footnotes of 1721, Bruntsfield Links were 'fields between Edinburgh and Maggy's, where the citizens commonly play at the gowff': *Poems* (1721), 17n. For other contemporary references to the game on this ground, see *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1689 to 1701*, ed. Helen Armet (Edinburgh, 1962), 186, 280–1; *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1701 to 1718*, ed. Helen Armet (Edinburgh, 1967), 313, 343.

²⁵ *Poems* (1721), 20n. For the phrase, to sleep 'as sound as a tap', see also Walter Scott, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, eds. David Hewitt and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh, 2004), 191.

the stanza that he had placed as number 2 in the first and second editions, which joins the speculation as to whether it was ‘the pith of broom’ or ‘some wild seed’ that made Maggy’s ale so strong.

After later these insertions, Ramsay returns to what were the last three stanzas of the first edition. He added a new second line (‘Not in the best ale put our trust’) to a revised version of what had been the 9th stanza in the first edition (14th in the second edition and 13th in the third). He added a new first line to the next stanza (‘Of wardly comforts she was Rife’), and a new second line to the final stanza (‘of brewers aw she boor the bell’). The first edition had the penultimate line of the last stanza as ‘Guess whether ye did ill or well’, but this is improved in the second and third editions to ‘Guess whether ye’re in Heaven or Hell’. The concluding ‘Epitaph’, without the exclamation mark of the first edition, remains otherwise unchanged: ‘O Rare Maggy Johnston’. In the title of the first edition, as also in both manuscript copies of the second edition, the eponymous hero is spelled ‘Maggie’, before the more familiar ‘Maggy’, consistent with the epitaph, is adopted in the final version.

At last, therefore, the long-lost first edition of this famous poem has been found. It finally demonstrates, what has long been suspected, that the *Elegy on Maggy Johnston* was initially printed on a single sheet. In this form it is likely to have been sold on the streets in the wake of its subject’s death. Comparison of all three editions of the text illustrates the way in which Ramsay developed and refined his work over time, in this case expanding an original 11 stanzas into 16, before editing them to a final 15. It also reveals that he did not immediately employ the ‘Standard Habbie’ verse form, but must have adopted it at about the time the Easy Club was becoming

established. That the diction in the second and third editions is more demotic than in the first also suggests that the years between 1711 and 1713 were formative in the making of Ramsay as a vernacular poet. He was not only discovering the medium that would go on to serve him so well, but also finding the voice that would define his mature work.

With the addition of the three stanzas about his drunken exploits among the corn riggs, the second and third editions are also far more personal than his initial effort. It is because Ramsay was himself a regular at Maggy's, thranging with the lairds and souters and bonny lasses, sitting weary with the walkers and golfers, and guzzling scuds with the Hy-jinks players, that the poem is at once so emotional, so vivid, and so funny. How often in his cups, we may imagine, did he cant the old story of his failure to get home that summer night; and sit around with the gamesters lamenting how 'wae-worth' Death had robbed them of their means to get 'fou' so quickly and cheaply; or join with Maggy's many 'gossies' to wonder whether she was in Heaven or Hell? Perhaps the crack evolved like the three editions of his poem.

[Allan Ramsay], *An Elegy On the very much Lamented Death of Maggie Johnston*
([Edinburgh? 1711?]): Signet Library Edinburgh, Broad-sides (3 vols.), i. 84.

Auld Riekie mourn in Sable Hew,
To Brave Tippony bid adiew,
 which we with Greed
Drank out, as fast as she could Brew.
 but ah! she's Dead.

Some say, it was the Effects of Broom,
(That in our Heads rais'd such a Foom)
 or some wild Seed,
Which aft the Chapen Stoup did toom,
 but fill'd our head.

Others assert, she had a Spell,
To make her Humming Liquor sell
 with Currant speed.
But ah! now's drain'd that Bouzing Well,
 since she is dead.

Then, must we lose the Knowledge fine?
Or hast thou left to Heirs of thine
 the subtile way,
Of brewing Ale as brisk as Wine,
 that made us gay?

When we ga'd o're *Burntsfield* Links,
Aften in *Maggie's* at Hy Jinks,
 we guzzel'd Scuds,
Till we cou'd scarce, wi' hail Out-drinks,
 cast aff our Dudds.

And wow but we war blyth and fain,
Whan ony had their Count mistane,
 O! it was Nice,
To hear us all cry, *Pike your Bane*,
 and spell your Dice.

In *Maggie's* we us'd to Drink and Rant
Untill we did baith Glow'r and gant,
 full swash I trow,
Then of Auld Stories we did Cant,

whan we were fow.

When we war weary'd at the Gouff,
Then *Maggy Johnston's* was our Houff,
 whare we did feed.
Now all our Gamesters may sing Douff
 since she is Dead.

But now, Dear *Maggie*, sen we must
When we are Breathless, turn to Dust,
 without remead.
Why shou'd we take it in Disgust,
 that thou art Dead.

Thou liv'd a lang and hearty Life,
Right free of Care, or Toyl, or Strife,
 till thou wast stale:
And kenn'd to be a Kanny Wife,
 for making Ale.

Than farewell *Maggy* Duce and Fell,
Let all your Gossips yelp and yell,
 and without fead,
Guess whether ye did ill or well,
 they're sure you'r Dead.

Epitaph.

O! Rare Maggy Johnston.

Maggie Johnstowns elegy
2d Edition Enlarged and Corrected
By ye Author
July 30, 1713

Auld Reekie mourn in sable hew
Let fowth of tears dreep like may dew
To braw tippony bid adieu
 which we with greed
Bended as fast as she cou'd brew
 But ah she's dead

2d

Some say it was the effects of broom
Which she stow'd in her masking loom
That in our heads rais'd such a foam
 Or some wild seed
Which aft the chappin stoup did toom
 But fill'd our head

3d

Frae what blae spite I cannot tell
Others assert she had a spell
To garr her nappie liquor sell
 Wi currant speed
But ah now's drain'd yt bowsing well
 Since she is dead

4th

To tell ye truth now Maggie dang
of Customers she had a bang
for Lords and Sutors aw did gang
 To drink be deen
The Barn and Yard was aft sa thrang
 we took the green

5

And there be dozens we lay down
and sweetly ca'd ye healths a bown
To Bonny lasses black or brown
 as we lik'd best
In bumpers we our care did drown
 and took out Rest

6th

When in our poutch we fand some clinks

and took a waak in bruntsfield links
aften in Maggies at high jinks
 we gusl'd scuds
till we cou'd scarce wi hail out drinks
 Cast aff our duds

7

Then cry'd we fill ye quaff again
And wow but we ware blyth and fain
Whane ony had their count Mistane
 O it was Nice
To hear us aw cry pike your bane
 and spell your dice

8th

In Maggie's we us'd to drink and Rant
Untill we did baith glowr and gaunt
and pish and spew and yesk and maunt
 full swash I trow
Then of auld stories we did cant
 quhan we ware fow

9

quhan we ware wearied at ye gowf
Then Maggie Johnstowns was our houf
Now all our gamesters may sing douf
 wi hearts hearts like lead
Death wi' his Rung Rax'd her a youf
 And sae she died

10

Mawn we be forc'd the art to tyne
for which we will right fare repine
Or has thou left to heirs of thine
 the packy knack
of brewing ale as brisk as wyne
 that garr'd us crack

11

Sae brawly did a peas scone toast
biz in ye quaff and flee ye frost
whare we got fow wi' little cost
 and meikle spead
Now wae worth death our sports aw lost
 Since Maggie's dead

12

Ae summers night I was sae fow
Amang ye Rigs I ga'de to spew
Syne down on a green back I trow

I took a Nap
and sough'd aw night ba-lily-low
as sound's a tap

13

Then quhan ye day began to glow
I Hirsled up my disy pow
frae mang ye corn yt high did grow
wi banes sae fare
I kend na mare than if a yew
How I came thare

14

But now since its sae that we must
Not in ye best ale put our trust
but whan we're auld Return to dust
without Remead
why should we tak it in disgust
that she is dead

15

Of warldly comforts she was Rife
And liv'd a lang and hearty life
Right free of care or toyle or strife
till she was stale
And kenn'd to be a kanny wife
for brewing ale

16

Then farewell Maggie douce and fell
of brewers aw she bore the bell
Let aw your gossies yelp and yell
and without fead
Guess whether ye're in heaven or hell
They're sure ye're dead

Epitaph
O Rare Maggy Johnstown

Elegies on Maggy Johnston, John Cowper, and Lucky Wood. By Allan Ramsay. Second Edition corrected and amended (Edinburgh: Printed for the Author, at the Mercury, opposite to Niddery's-Wynd. 1718), 3–8.

Elegy on Maggy Johnston, Who Died *Anno* 1711.

Auld Reeky mourn in Sable Hue,
Let fouth of Tears dreep like *May* Dew,
To braw Tiponny bid Adieu,
 Which we with Greed
Bended as fast as she cou'd Brew,
 But Ah! she's dead.

To tell the Truth, now *Maggy* dang,
Of Customers she had a Bang;
For Lairds and Souters a did gang
 To drink bedeem:
To Barn and Yard was aft sae Thrang
 We took the Green.

And there by Dizens we lay down,
Syne sweetly ca'd the Healths arown
To bonny Lasses black or brown,
 As we loo'd best.
In Bumpers we dull Cares did drown,
 And took our Rest.

When in our Poutch we fand some Clinks,
And took a Turn o're *Bruntsfield* Links,
Aften in *Maggy's* at Hy-jinks
 We guzled Scuds,
Till we cou'd scarce wi hale-out Drinks
 Cast aff our Duds.

We drank and drew, and fill'd again,
O wow! but we were blyth and fain
When ony had their Count mistain;
 O it was nice,
To hear us a cry, Pike your Bain
 And spell ye'r Dice.

Fou close we us'd to drink and rant,
Until we did baith glowre and gaunt,

And pish and spew, and yesk and maunt
 Right swash I trew,
Then of auld Stories we did cant
 Whan we were fou.

Whan we were weary'd at the Gouff,
Then *Maggy Johnston's* was our Houff,
Now a our Gamesters may sit douff
 Wi Hearts like Lead,
Death wi his Rung rax'd her a Youff,
 And sae she die'd.

Maun we be forc'd thy Skill to tine,
For which we will right fair repine;
Or hast thou left to Bairns of thine
 The pauky Knack
Of Brewing Ale amaist like Wine,
 That gar'd us Crack.

Sae brawly did a Pea-scon Toast,
Biz i' the Queff, and flie the Frost,
There we gat fou wi little Cost,
 And muckle speed;
Now wae-worth Death, our Sport's a lost
 Since Maggy's dead.

Ae Simmer Night I was sae fou,
Amang the Riggs I gae'd to spew,
Syn down on a green Bauk I trew
 I took a Nap,
And soucht a Night Balillilow
 As sound's a Tap.

And whan the Dawn begoud to glow,
I hirsl'd up my dizzy Pow
Frae 'mang the Corn like Wirry-Kow,
 Wi Bains sae sair,
And ken'd nae mair than if a Ew
 How I came there.

Some said it was the Pith of Broom
That she stow'd in her Masking Loom,
Which in our Heads rais'd sic a Foom,
 Or some wild Seed,

Which aft the Chaping Stoup did toom,
But fill'd our Head.

But now since it's sae that we must
Not in the best Ale put our trust,
But whan we'r auld return to Dust
Without remead,
Why shou'd we tak it in disgust
That Maggy's dead.

Of wardly Comforts she was Rife,
And liv'd a lang and hearty Life,
Right free of Care, or Toil, or Strife
Till she was Stale,
And ken'd to be a kanny Wife
At brewing Ale.

Then Farewell, *Maggy*, Douse and Fell,
Of Brewers a thou boor the Bell;
Let a thy Gossies yelp and yell,
And without Feed,
Guess whether ye'r in Heaven or Hell,
They're sure ye're dead.

EPITAPH.

O Rare MAGGY JOHNSTON.